

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (canceled).

Claim 2 (currently amended): ~~Longitudinal~~ The longitudinal shaft as recited in claim ~~±~~ 8, wherein the ~~central articulation (4) has an~~ third inner hub ~~(15)~~ having a central bore ~~(16)~~ that is provided with a plug-in tooth system ~~(17)~~, which accommodates a journal ~~(9)~~ of a the first shaft segment ~~(2) of the longitudinal shaft (1)~~ for plug-in centering for integral rotation.

Claim 3 (currently amended): ~~Longitudinal~~ The longitudinal shaft as recited in claim ~~±~~ 8, wherein the ~~two~~ first and second shaft segments ~~(2, 3)~~ of the longitudinal shaft ~~(1)~~ are configured as shaft tubes, and the first, second, and third ~~outer~~ hubs ~~(7, 11, 12) of the gearbox side articulation (5), the differential side articulation (6), and the central articulation (4)~~ are shaped sheet-metal parts directly connected with the shaft tubes.

Claim 4 (currently amended): ~~Longitudinal~~ The longitudinal shaft as recited in claim 1 8, wherein the gearbox-side articulation ~~(5)~~ and/or the central articulation ~~(4)~~ are sliding articulations.

Claim 5 (currently amended): ~~Longitudinal~~ The longitudinal shaft as recited in claim 4, wherein the gearbox-side articulation and the central articulation are sliding articulations and the sliding articulations ~~(4, 5)~~ together have an assembly displacement path ~~(2-1₁ + 2-1₂)~~, which corresponds to at least a length ~~(L)~~, with which the gearbox output shaft or the differential input shaft ~~(24)~~ projects into the first or second inner hub ~~(15, 18)~~ of the gearbox side articulation ~~(5)~~ or the differential side articulation ~~(6)~~ in operation.

Claim 6 (currently amended): ~~Longitudinal~~ The longitudinal shaft as recited in claim 1 8, wherein the differential-side articulation ~~(6)~~ is a synchronous articulation.

Claim 7 (currently amended): ~~Longitudinal~~ The longitudinal shaft as recited in claim 1 8, wherein the first shaft segment is

a gearbox-side shaft segment and the second shaft segment is a differential-side shaft segment, said first shaft segment having
~~(2) has~~ a diameter $\langle D_2 \rangle$ that deviates from a diameter $\langle D_3 \rangle$ of the ~~differential-side~~ second shaft segment ~~(3)~~, in such a manner that the two shaft segments ~~(2, 3)~~ of the longitudinal shaft ~~(1)~~ can be pushed onto one another in the manner of a telescope.

Claim 8 (new): A longitudinal shaft for use in an automobile having all-wheel drive or rear-wheel drive comprising:

(a) a gearbox-side articulation having a first inner hub and a first outer hub at least partly surrounding the first inner hub;

(b) a differential-side articulation having a second inner hub and a second outer hub at least partly surrounding the second inner hub;

(c) a central articulation having a third inner hub and a third outer hub at least partly surrounding the third inner hub at least in some regions; and

(d) first and second shaft segments connected with one another so as to rotate together by way of said central articulation;

wherein each of said first and second inner hubs has a respective central bore provided with a plug-in connection to connect the longitudinal shaft for integral rotation and to center the longitudinal shaft on journals of a gearbox output shaft and a differential input shaft, respectively.

Claim 9 (new): A longitudinal shaft for use in an automobile having all-wheel drive or rear-wheel drive comprising:

(a) a gearbox-side articulation having a first inner hub and a first outer hub at least partly surrounding the first inner hub;

(b) a differential-side articulation having a second inner hub and a second outer hub at least partly surrounding the second inner hub;

(c) a shaft segment connected with the first and second outer hub so as to rotate together;

wherein each of said first and second inner hubs has a respective central bore provided with a plug-in connection to connect the longitudinal shaft for integral rotation and to center the longitudinal shaft on journals of a gearbox output shaft and a differential input shaft, respectively.

Claim 10 (new): The longitudinal shaft as recited in claim 9, wherein at least one sliding unit is provided in the longitudinal shaft.

Claim 11 (new): The longitudinal shaft as recited in claim 10, wherein the at least one sliding unit comprises a sliding articulation.